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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable MARK PRYOR, a Senator from the State of Arkansas.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Today's opening prayer will be offered by the guest Chaplain, Rev. Angel L. Berrios from Severn, MD.

PRAYER

The guest Chaplain offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Father in Heaven, we take time to acknowledge Your presence here with us right now. We humbly come to You in prayer, believing that You alone are the one and only true God, sovereign, and almighty. Forgive us our shortcomings and disobediences, and honor our faith and sincere efforts to serve You.

We pray for each Senator that the Holy Spirit would give them wisdom and guidance to make right decisions for every issue that is presented in this session.

Father, we affirm that our Nation belongs to You; therefore, we as a people also yield ourselves to You, to Your will, so that we can bring glory and honor to Your kingdom. Thank You for Your daily mercies and grace upon each of us.

In Jesus' Name we pray. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable MARK PRYOR led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, September 20, 2007.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable MARK PRYOR, a Senator from the State of Arkansas, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mr. PRYOR thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, this morning, following any time Senator MCCONNELL and I may use, the Senate will conduct a period of morning business until 10:30. We need to start at that time. There is so much left on the Defense authorization bill. The time in morning business is equally divided and controlled between the two sides; the majority will control the first portion. Following that, the Senate will resume consideration of the Department of Defense authorization bill with debate continuing on the Cornyn amendment.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 2070

Mr. REID. It is my understanding that S. 2070 is at the desk and due for its second reading.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2070) to prevent Government shutdowns.

Mr. REID. I object to any further proceedings with respect to this bill.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard. The bill will be placed on the calendar.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will be a period for the transaction of morning business until 10:30, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally controlled and divided by the two sides, with the majority controlling the first 30 minutes and the Republicans controlling the final 30 minutes.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DESEGREGATION OF LITTLE ROCK CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL

Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. President, September 25, 2007, marks the 50th anniversary of one of the most important days in our country's history and certainly one of the most important days in the history of our State of Arkansas. On that day in 1957, Minnijean Brown, Elizabeth Eckford, Ernest Green, Thelma Mothershed, Melba Pattillo, Gloria Ray, Terrence Roberts, Jefferson

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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Thomas, and Carlotta Walls changed the world when they entered the doors to Little Rock Central High School and desegregated the Little Rock school district.

Known collectively as the Little Rock Nine, these brave young men and women faced down a jeering crowd, the Arkansas National Guard, and even their own Governor to take a principled stand and march toward greater equality for all in our Nation and in my home State of Arkansas.

As the mother of growing children right now, thinking of what those students must have felt at that time to have taken such a stand, to stand before their peers who were jeering and yelling at them, to stand up to authority as they did, must have been incredible.

Next week in Little Rock, we will commemorate the heroic sacrifice these students made to blaze a trail so that future generations could benefit. In doing so, it is also appropriate to recognize those in the community who uplifted these individuals and gave them the strength they needed.

Arkansas Daisy and L.C. Bates, Chris Mercer, Wiley Branton, and future Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall either gave these children daily guidance or fought for them in the court system to ensure they could have access to a quality education that was their right as a citizen of this country.

We all think about the images and certainly the impression we leave on children today. We think about these individuals who made such an impact in the support they gave these children as they took this very important step. We must also not forget the enormous role the parents of the Little Rock Nine played to ignore threats and intimidation that came their way.

Again, as a parent and thinking of the preparation that goes into encouraging your children to take new steps and to stand up for what is right is tough because you know what your children will come up against. Those parents had to have had mixed emotions to send their children out there and wonder what kind of harm or what kind of crushing blow would come to their self-esteem or to their confidence.

Yet they supported it in every way known, making sure their clothes looked perfect or making sure their bodies and their souls were strong. What incredible parents they were.

What happened in Little Rock 50 years ago is not only a testament to those students, but it is also a testament to those who supported them. It is a testament to the people of Little Rock of all backgrounds who decided they would confront their own conscience, and it is a testament to those who, upon reflecting upon the matter, decided that doing what is right was worth the cost.

I also wish to recognize other communities in Arkansas that led the way for integration in the Deep South, even

prior to the famous standoff of 1957; often these others receive little attention. Shortly after the Brown v. Board of Education decision in 1954, the communities of Charleston, Fayetteville, and Hoxie desegregated their schools to comply with the ruling of the Supreme Court.

Former U.S. Senator Dale Bumpers, a Charleston native and the attorney for the Charleston School Board in 1954, was very involved in his community's decision.

In a recent newspaper interview, he recounted that the members of the Charleston School Board made up their mind that the Supreme Court decision meant what it said and Charleston could save itself a lot of trouble by going ahead and integrating immediately instead of fighting it, fighting it out, essentially knowing it would be a lost cause.

Dale Bumpers continued to push for change, later as a lawyer, our Governor in Arkansas, and our U.S. Senator in Arkansas. In 1988, he authored the legislation that established the Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site which is administered by the National Park Service, the Little Rock School District and the City of Little Rock and other entities.

He was also responsible for the legislation that awarded the Little Rock Nine with the Congressional Gold Medal, our Nation's highest civilian honor. Monday, I and my colleagues will be in Little Rock to dedicate the new visitors center and the museum at that site. The new center will feature exhibits on the Little Rock Nine and the road to desegregation.

As a young child myself who experienced firsthand the integration of schools in my hometown of Helena, AR, I cannot imagine the fear and anxiety those students must have felt in that tumultuous environment in 1957.

I feel fortunate that my community embraced the process of integration and that my parents, in particular, were engaged and kept me in the local school district when so many of my friends were being moved to private schools.

My husband Steve, who is a graduate of Little Rock Central High School, and I are both better people for learning in integrated schools and experiencing the diversity and what it provides us.

I appreciate the lifelong lessons I learned in my early years. It is because of the Little Rock Nine that it was possible. Their decision to move this Nation forward makes me proud to be an Arkansan. It makes me proud to be an American.

In closing, I wish to specifically thank my colleagues from the Arkansas delegation, especially the Presiding Officer, my colleague, Senator MARK PRYOR, and Congressman VIC SNYDER. I have been so proud to work with both of them to secure the funding for the new visitors center.

In addition, I joined with Senator PRYOR, who also attended Little Rock

Central High, to introduce a resolution which recognizes the 50th anniversary of the school desegregation. It passed the Senate earlier this month. I wish to thank all my colleagues for their support in that effort.

We all know there is still much to be done, still much that can be done in our country to ensure the goals of the Little Rock Nine are achieved and that equal rights are available for each and every individual in this great Nation.

We have come very far in the last 50 years. As we move forward, we should let the lessons of the past provide a measure of our progress and the inspiration to build on our achievements for all our fellow Americans.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. PRYOR. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. LINCOLN.) Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. PRYOR. Madam President, the names Ernest Green, Elizabeth Eckford, Gloria Ray Karlmark, Carlotta Walls LaNier, Minnijean Brown Trickey, Terrence Roberts, Jefferson Thomas, Thelma Mothershed Wair, Melba Pattillo Beals are part of Arkansas history and part of America's history.

When I talked to the so-called Little Rock Nine about the fact that we were able to secure funding for the visitors center, Minnijean Brown Trickey said it was an affirmation of a very beautiful and tragic story.

I think she captured it. The story of Little Rock Central High School in 1957 is a story of courage, of hardship, of justice, faith, tradition, power, opportunity, and leadership. I think that is why the story is so powerful, because it connects so many of those things all in one event or one series of events.

It has all of those elements, but there is also more to the story. The "more to the story" part is what I wanted to talk about today. We are here to talk about the events in 1957, to talk about the very painful but ultimately successful integration of a large public high school in a Southern city.

I need to thank my colleagues, Senator LINCOLN from Arkansas; my colleague in the House, Congressman VIC SNYDER; and also a colleague who is no longer with us in the Senate, Conrad Burns, because we all worked together to get the money for the Little Rock Central High Visitors Center, which will open this coming Monday.

But that is not all who worked in this effort. The National Park Service, the city of Little Rock, the 50th Anniversary Commemoration Committee, the Little Rock Nine Foundation, and countless others worked to have this special grand opening Monday; to have a visitors center, for a place that has a

place in our Nation's history on the civil rights struggle that has gone on in this country.

Also, I wish to say that Congressman VIC SNYDER was able to get a commemorative coin for Little Rock Central and the Little Rock Nine. I certainly helped him do that, along with Senator LINCOLN. We all worked hard on that, but Congressman SNYDER took the lead role.

This Friday night at Little Rock Central High School in Quigley Stadium, the Little Rock Central High Tigers will play the Pine Bluff Zebras. Once again, we find Little Rock Central is ranked in the top 10 in the Arkansas top 10 football rankings. But that stadium played a role in the Central High crisis. It is a role that is often forgotten because we focus on the Little Rock Nine, and certainly we should.

We focus on the turbulence in trying to integrate the school, and certainly we should. But also there were many other happenings at Little Rock Central that year. One of them was Little Rock Central High School just so happened to have what Sports Illustrated and other sports magazines and publications have called one of the alltime greatest high school football teams. That week Central High won its 23rd game in a row, against a team from Louisiana. The week before they beat a team from Texas. That same week, when the 101st Airborne showed up to restore order and keep the peace around the campus of Little Rock High School, the 101st Airborne set up their equipment on the Tigers' practice field.

Well, that was a huge no-no in the mind of Coach Wilson Matthews. He went out there and he barked orders to the 101st Airborne like they were his own football team. They hopped to and they got off the practice field. That Friday night, when the stands were full and the Tigers took the field, they looked up and there was the 101st Airborne cheering for the Central High School Tigers.

That story is captured in a great story in Sports Illustrated from this past year's April 9 publication. It captures the humanity and the impact that crisis had on people, not just that day or that year but for a lifetime.

The Little Rock Central High School story is complicated in some ways. It is about the best and the worst in American history. In some ways, it is about a city that is struggling to try, in post-war America, to work through many racial issues. It is a story that is not always successful. It is not always easy. But it is a story that in the end is a great story and is one that needs to be told.

Let me talk for a couple more minutes about the events of that day and why Little Rock Central is so important to the history of this country. First, we focus on the Little Rock Nine, and understandably these nine young black children had to pay a huge price; it took a lot of courage to do

what they did. But it is more than them.

We had a Southern city that, by most standards, was considered to be a moderate Southern city when it came to race. The Little Rock School Board took the 1954 Brown v. Board of Education decision literally, and they believed they needed to integrate the Little Rock School System with all deliberate speed, as the Supreme Court said.

The quickest they could figure out to do it was in the fall of 1957. Of course, when that happened, they entered into this vortex of emotions, this vortex where you see a nation being torn apart by race and by many policies, not just in the South. We talk about the South, but certainly there is racism all over this country, and this country was in a struggle for civil rights.

In fact, it goes back to the founding documents of our democracy and our Declaration of Independence. It says all men are created equal. That is what the desegregation, the integration movement was about in this country: Are all men created equal or are there going to be two sets of everything for people in this country?

The Supreme Court did what it did. The local school board did what it did. The Governor in our State, to his everlasting shame, did not support what the school board did and actually energized people to oppose what the school board had done. The President had to call in the 101st Airborne to try to stop what was going on at Little Rock Central. Here is a photo of the famous Little Rock Nine. They are going to be honored all week in Little Rock. Again, they showed tremendous courage as they went through this process. Here we see a photo of Little Rock Central High with the 101st Airborne escorting students into the building. It is hard to imagine today; we have made such progress. I will be the first to say we are not there yet when it comes to race, but we have made so much progress.

Little Rock Central High School was a turning point. It didn't mean the struggle was over. In a lot of ways, it meant the struggle was beginning. But we have made a lot of progress. We have a lot to be proud of. Not everything that happened in 1957 is something Arkansas is proud of. But nonetheless, it was a huge turning point in making this country better.

I close talking about Little Rock Central High School today. Here is a photo of it today. The school looks identical to the way it looked in 1957. The architects of this country have called it one of the most beautiful high schools in America. It is now also one of the most successful high schools in America.

I pulled something off a history Web site. It says:

Central offers students an international studies magnet program and an extensive curriculum including more than 30 Advanced Placement . . . courses. Central consistently has more National Merit Semifinalists than

any other school in the state (19 in 2006-07 alone), claims a large percentage of the state's National Achievement Semifinalists (approximately 20% of Arkansas' total between 1994 and 2004) and has produced 15 Presidential Scholars since the program's inception in 1964.

Part of the story of Little Rock Central must include what has happened since September 25, 1957. Part of the story of Little Rock Central is a story about rebuilding, about integrating, about coming back, and about success.

I was very honored to have an opportunity to go to Little Rock Central High School, as did the husband of the senior Senator from the State of Arkansas. It has produced many strong leaders in the State. One of those was a dear friend of mine, Roosevelt Thompson, who passed away tragically when he was in college. But the story of Little Rock Central is a story that touches all of us. It is a very important part of our State's history and our national history.

We are honored that all nine of the Little Rock Nine are still living today and will be in Little Rock this week to commemorate some very difficult but very important events for this country.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. COBURN. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

DEBT LIMIT

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I want to spend a few minutes talking about something that will come up in the next week or 10 days. That is an extension and expansion of the debt limit. An attempt will be made to do this by unanimous consent. That is wrong. Every Member of the Senate ought to be on record on whether we ought to expand again the amount of borrowing we are going to place on the backs of our children and grandchildren. The current statutory debt limit is \$8.965 trillion. It was last raised March 20, 2006. This Senator voted against that. We have been on notice since that time that we needed to make the effort to rein in wasteful Washington spending so that we do not have to, in fact, borrow more money against our children's future. Only 10 years ago it was \$5.95 billion. We have increased the debt in the last 10 years by 50 percent.

What does that mean? Individually, that means \$30,000 for every man, woman, and child. But the important aspect is not just what we owe now but what the unfunded liabilities are for the future which are in excess of \$70 trillion. What does that mean if you are born today? That means if you are born today, you will be inheriting at the moment of your birth liabilities of